

5. (Previously Amended) The device according to Claim 22, wherein said plurality of openings are symmetrically disposed throughout said planar top surface.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Amended) The device according to Claim 22, wherein said plurality of openings are slots that enlarge when said planar top surface is stretched.

8. (Previously Amended) The device according to Claim 22, wherein said planar top surface is translucent.

9. (Previously Amended) The device according to Claim 22, wherein said planar top surface has a circular peripheral shape.

10. (Previously Amended) The device according to Claim 22, wherein said planar top surface has a polygonal peripheral shape.

11. (Currently Amended) An assembly, comprising:
a container having an open top end with a predetermined maximum width;
an elastomeric cover element for covering said open top end, said cover element having an unstretched width that is smaller than said maximum width of said open top end wherein said cover element must be elastically stretched to a stretched width greater than said maximum width of said open top end to cover said open top end; and
a grid pattern plurality of openings defined in said cover element, said grid pattern having multiple rows and multiple columns, wherein multiple openings are arranged in each of said rows and each of said columns.

12. (Previously Amended) The assembly according to Claim 11, wherein said open top end of said container is not symmetrical and said cover element conforms to the open top end of the container when engaged with the open top of the container.

13. (Original) The assembly according to Claim 11, wherein said cover element has a planar top surface and a peripheral wall that extends downwardly from said planar top surface.

14. (Currently Amended) The assembly according to Claim 13, wherein said ~~grid pattern is~~ plurality of openings are arranged in linear rows and columns on said planar top surface.

15. (Currently Amended) The assembly according to Claim 13, wherein said ~~plurality of~~ openings are slots that enlarge when said cover element is stretched.

16. (Original) The assembly according to Claim 11, wherein said cover element is translucent.

17. (Original) The assembly according to Claim 11, wherein said cover element has a circular peripheral shape.

18. (Original) The assembly according to Claim 11, wherein said cover element has a polygonal peripheral shape.

19. (Currently Amended) A method of preparing a vase for a floral arrangement, wherein the vase has an open top with a maximum width at least one point, said method comprising the steps of:

providing an elastomeric cover, containing a plurality of openings ~~therein that are arranged in a grid pattern of multiple rows and multiple columns, wherein~~ said elastomeric cover ~~has~~ having a width that is less than said maximum width of said vase, ~~and~~

wherein multiple openings are present in each of said rows and said columns;

stretching said elastomeric cover over said open top of said vase, wherein said width of said elastomeric cover elastically increases to a width greater than that of said vase and engages said vase around said open top.

20. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 19, wherein said cover has a planar top surface and a peripheral wall that extends downwardly from said planar top surface, wherein said ~~grid pattern is plurality of openings are arranged in linear rows and columns~~ on said planar top surface.

21. (Previously Added) The method according to Claim 19, further including the step of inserting elements of a floral arrangement through said plurality of openings and into said vase.

22. (Currently Amended) A floral arrangement cover for a vase, wherein the vase has an open top, said cover comprising:

an elastic planar top surface in which are defined a plurality of openings ~~that are arranged in a grid pattern of multiple rows and multiple columns, wherein multiple openings are disposed within each of said rows and said columns;~~

an elastic peripheral wall that extends downwardly from said planar top surface, said elastic planar top and said elastic peripheral wall being elastically stretchable to a stretched size where said peripheral wall can receive the open top of the vase therein and said elastic planar top spans the open top of the vase, wherein said peripheral wall engages the vase around the open top by contracting around the open top.